

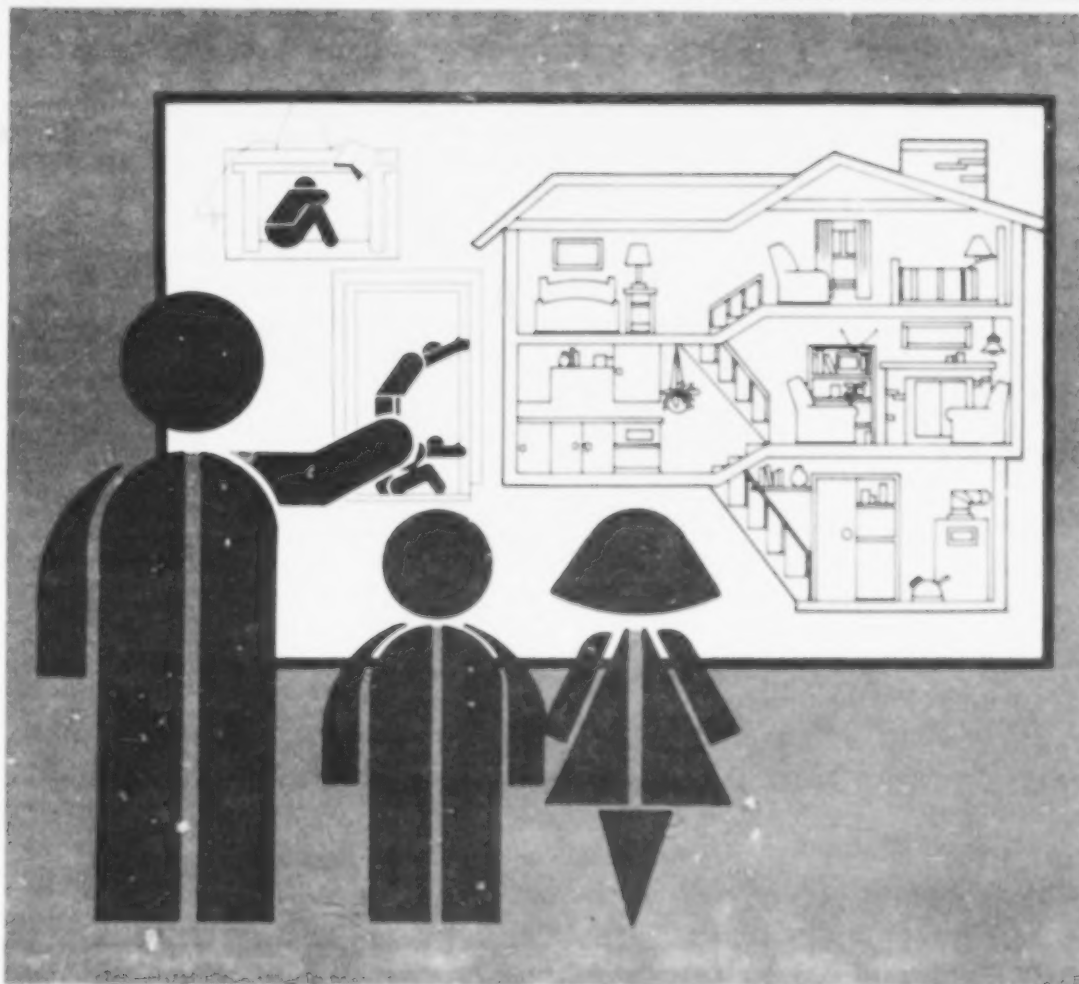
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FAMILY EARTHQUAKE SAFETY HOME HAZARD HUNT AND DRILL

American
Red Cross



FEM 1.2:

READY
FIGHT

best copy available

If you've never experienced an earthquake, it may be difficult to imagine the damage an earthquake could cause in your home. Although the United States has not recently suffered the devastation earthquakes have caused in other countries, scientists predict that it could happen here.

The lives and property of 70 million people in 39 states and territories are at risk from earthquakes. And the threat is not confined to those areas on fault lines; earthquakes can cause damage many miles away.

Earthquake deaths and injuries are seldom caused by the actual movement of the ground but from falling objects and debris. Most frequently, injuries at home are caused by partial building collapse; flying glass; overturned bookcases, furniture, appliances; and fires from broken chimneys, broken gas lines, and downed electrical lines.

This booklet is divided into two sections which discuss identifying and correcting hazards in the home and practicing what to do if an earthquake occurs.

HAZARD HUNT An important step to earthquake preparedness is to survey your home for possible hazards and then take action to lessen those hazards. Once you identify what needs to be corrected, it doesn't take much time or money to make your home a safer place to live every day.

DRILLS Another important step is to be sure your family knows what to do if an earthquake occurs. Earthquake drills are an excellent way to help your family plan and remember what to do in a violent earthquake. You should learn WHERE to seek shelter and HOW to protect yourself.

Hazard Hunt

Your earthquake home hazard hunt should begin with all family members participating. Foresight, imagination, and common sense are all that are needed as you go from room to room, imagining what would happen if the earth and house started shaking.

Anything that can move, break, or fall when your house starts to shake is a potential hazard.

What would happen to heavy furniture, fixtures, and appliances?

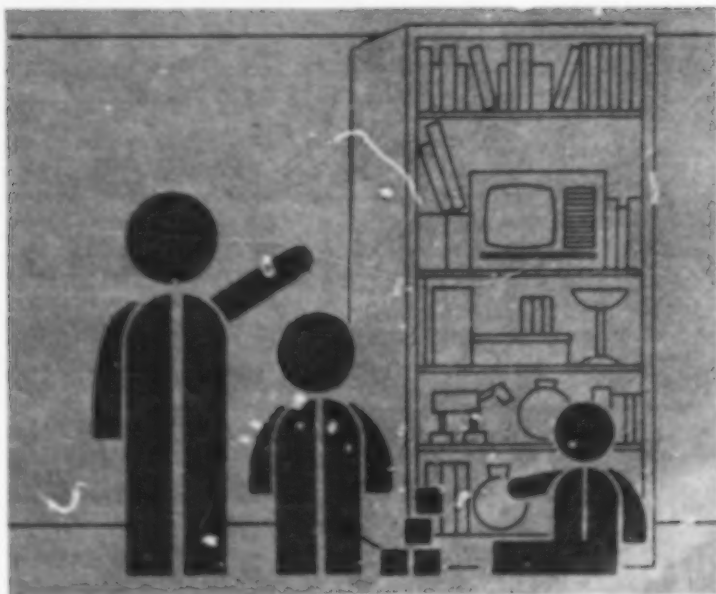
- Look at the floor-to-ceiling bookcase. How much would fall off the shelves? Will the whole bookcase topple, or is it anchored to the wall? Anchor bookcases and other top-heavy furniture to wall studs using metal angle braces ("L" brackets) and lag screws. Be sure shelves are fastened.
- Prevent refrigerators, washers, and other heavy appliances from moving by blocking the rollers.
- Add bracing to support air conditioners, particularly on rooftops.
- Do you have hanging plants or light fixtures? Could they swing and hit a window or swing off their hooks? As a minimum precaution, transfer hanging plants from heavy clay pots to lighter ones and use closed hooks on all hanging items.

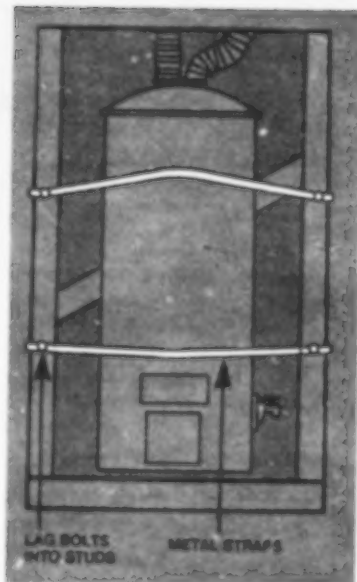
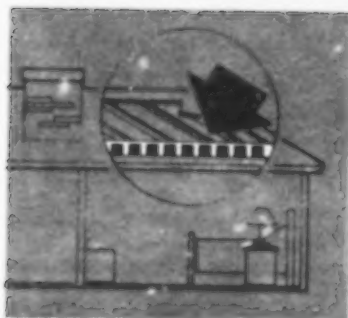
Check for possible flying glass.

- Replace glass bottles from the medicine cabinet and from above or around the bathtub with plastic containers.
- What kind of latches are on your kitchen cabinets? Consider replacing magnetic "touch" latches with ones that will hold the

cabinet door shut during an earthquake. In some cases, a lip or low barrier across shelves may prevent breakables from sliding out.

- Where do you sit or sleep? Anchor heavy mirrors and pictures over bed, chairs, and couches with wire through eye screws into studs. Locate beds away from windows.





are those bricks likely to fall? If your roof doesn't have solid sheathing, consider adding a plywood shield to ceiling joists.

- Check your roof. Make sure all tiles are secured—loose ones could fall.

More ambitious precautions can include bracing the structure of your house.

- Check foundations for loose or cracked plaster.
- Bolt the wood sill to the concrete foundation.
- Sheath foundation "cripple walls" with plywood to prevent collapse.
- Strengthen connections between posts and beams with metal T-straps.

With your powers of perception more finely tuned to this problem, extend these suggestions to your workplace. If you have little or no control of your work environment, at least check to determine if your company has an earthquake safety plan.

Children can share their new awareness in the classroom. Determine if their school has a practical earthquake plan, if earthquake drills are held, and what the policy is if an earthquake occurs while school is in session.

Think about fire safety.

- Remove all flammable liquids, such as painting and cleaning products, to the garage or outside storage area. Be sure these items are stored away from heat sources and appliances, particularly your hot water heater and furnace.
- Secure gas lines by installing flexible connectors to appliances.
- Is your hot water heater secured? Thin metal straps, known as "plumbers tape," can be used to fasten your hot water heater to the wood studs of the nearest wall.

What would happen to the house itself?

- Look at the outside of your home. What about your chimney? Where

Earthquake Drills

Earthquakes are frightening, and not knowing what to do can make you more frightened. How can you turn the tendency to panic into life-saving action? By **PLANNING** and **PRACTICING** what to do before an earthquake occurs, you and your family can learn to react correctly and automatically when the first jolt or shaking begins.

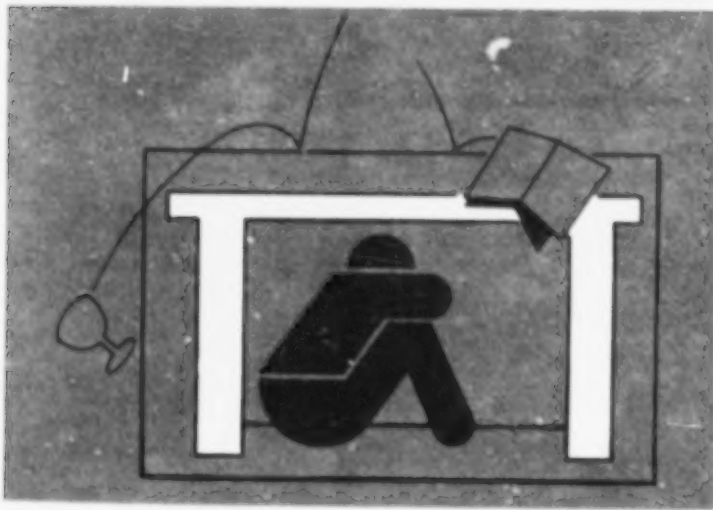
The greatest hazard in an earthquake is falling objects. First, **STAY CALM**. If you are inside, **STAY INSIDE**, don't run outside.

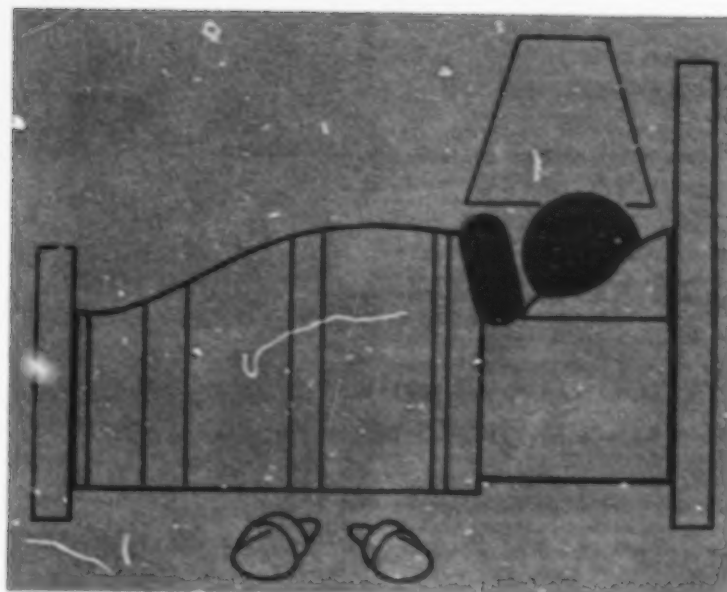
The first step is to have each family member learn the safe spots in each room. Then reinforce this knowledge by physically placing yourselves in these locations. This is a very important step for your children. Acting out what they are taught will help them remember what to do in case

you're not beside them at the critical time.

WHAT TO DO

- Stand or crouch in a strong supported doorway, or
- Get under a sturdy table or desk, or
- Brace yourself in an inside corner of the house





Next, identify danger zones in each room. During an earthquake, each family member should know to get as far as possible from these hazards.

- Stay away from windows and other glass that might shatter
- Stay clear of bookcases, cabinets, and other furniture that may topple or slide
- Stay away from heating units, stoves, fireplaces, and areas where bricks might fall from a chimney
- Stay clear of spaces that could be blocked by falling debris

In the days that follow your first drill, hold surprise drills. Call out "earthquake" from wherever you are and have each family member respond by moving to the safest place.

- At night, keep a pair of shoes by your bed to protect feet from broken glass and other debris
- Anyone in the kitchen should remember to turn off the stove, if possible

Once a month, let a child call a surprise earthquake drill and follow through with what you've learned. Test each other. Was there one choice that was safest? Did anyone pick a place that could be sealed shut or blocked off by falling objects?

Finally, imagine what you may experience after a major earthquake and what your first actions should be. You may be on your own for several days after an earthquake because emergency personnel cannot get to you.

- Be prepared for aftershocks. These may be nearly as strong as the initial earthquake. Take cover quickly if shaking begins again.
- If you smell gas, get to the gas and water mains and turn them off. Don't light matches or candles to look for damage.

- Be prepared to deal with the emotional needs of family members. Stay close enough to touch and comfort each other. Talk about what happened and be sure to encourage your children to talk about their feelings.



People who live in areas where small earthquakes frequently occur may become complacent to the threat of a major earthquake. Others who live in areas at risk to earthquakes may have never experienced one. But 39 states and nearly 70 million people in this country are at risk from earthquakes. Find out about your area, and take action now to prevent loss and trauma later. Other publications are available on earthquake safety. Contact your local emergency services office for more information.

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